



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OPERATION: IDENTITY CRISIS PROGRAM LAUNCHED

NEW HAMPSHIRE – Citing a new Federal Trade Commission survey that shows more than 9.9 million people were victims of identity theft in the last year alone, the United States Postal Inspection Service announced the launch of “Operation: Identity Crisis,” an unprecedented consumer education initiative to prevent citizens from becoming victims of identity theft. The Federal Trade Commission, the United States Secret Service, the Department of Justice, and financial organizations are partnering with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in the campaign. The spokesman for the campaign is Jerry Orbach, star of television’s *Law & Order*, who will appear in a nationally distributed public service announcement.

“The goal of this project is to arm people with information that will help them fight back against identity thieves and decrease the number of identity theft victims throughout the country,” said NH/VT District Manager James H. Adams.

Identity theft involves acquiring key pieces of someone’s personal identifying information, such as name, address, date of birth, and social security number, in order to impersonate them. The information enables the identity thief to commit numerous forms of fraud, which include taking over the victim’s financial accounts; opening new bank accounts; purchasing homes and automobiles; applying for loans, credit cards, and social security benefits; renting apartments; and establishing service with utility and phone companies.

“It takes an average of 12 months for victims to discover their identity has been stolen,” said Postal Inspector In Charge Kenneth Jones. “US Postal Inspectors made over 3,000 identity theft arrests this fiscal year.”

US Postal Inspectors recommend the following prevention tips:

- Don’t leave mail in mailbox overnight or on weekends.
- Deposit mail in U.S. Postal Service collection boxes.
- Tear up or shred unwanted documents that contain personal information.
- Review consumer credit report annually.

For additional information on identity theft, visit www.usps.com/postalinspectors.

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